

Catholic Charities

Summer 2004

Archdiocese of Boston

A Mission of Hope for Every Stage of Life

Children growing up in violent neighborhoods. Families in need of food. A newly arrived immigrant in search of a place to live. These are just a few of the many clients served by Catholic Charities. Our programs and services provide assistance to people in need as they pass through the various stages of life.

Many of our programs and services are determined by the ages of our clients. We help youth who are dealing with peer pressure, bullying and family stresses find a mentor. Adults struggling to support their family enroll in our adult education programs, and our child care programs are in demand as working parents must find affordable care. Elderly adults are living longer and are

likely not to be insured because many survive on a fixed income and cannot afford insurance. They look to our community health services.

Assistance is also offered to a wide array of clients dealing with difficult life situations. Catholic Charities helps recovering drug and alcohol abusers, people living with AIDS and those who are homeless.

In this issue, you will read about a few of these programs, specifically those offering services to youth, elders and immigrant mothers. Catholic Charities is privileged to help all those in need in Eastern Massachusetts and will continue to strive to meet their various needs. ♡

Dorchester Teens Visit Washington, D.C.

The National Mall, the Library of Congress and the National Zoo were just a few stops made by teens from Greater Boston Catholic Charities' Teen Center during their visit to Washington, D.C. in April.

The four-day trip also included visits with Ambassador Jose Brito at the Cape Verde Embassy, as well as Congressmen Michael Capuano and Barney Frank in the Capitol building. The visit with Ambassador Brito was of particular interest because a majority of the teenagers are from Cape Verde or of Cape Verdean descent. Congressman Capuano encouraged the teens to get a good education, while Congressman Frank spoke to them about his experiences visiting Cape Verde.

"Our trip to Washington, D.C. was great and fun because I had the chance to go to a place that I'd never been," said Carlota, one of the teens. "I also think that the visit to Washington, D.C. was helpful for me because I saw things that I do not have in my country of Cape Verde."

"All the teens had a great time. It's the type of thing they'll remember for a long time," said Russell Hansen, an AmeriCorps member volunteering at the Teen Center who went on the trip.

The Teen Center, operating out of St. Peter's School in Dorchester, provides educational, leadership development and recreational activities for adolescents of the mid-Dorchester corridor. Activities for teens begin at 5 p.m. each weekday with focus groups and homework help. Focus groups meet once each week to address adolescent development issues



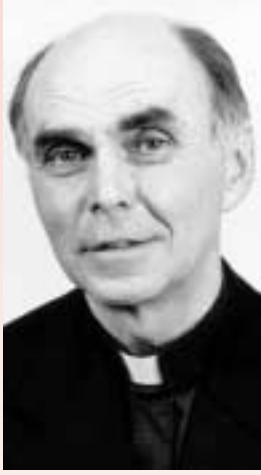
Teens from the Greater Boston Catholic Charities Teen Center touring the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

Continued on page 3.

In This Issue...

Message from the President	2	Kudos	3
Befriending the Elderly	2	Yawkey Foundation Awards \$5 Million to Support New Community Service Center . . .	4
HMSC Offers Unique Services to Mothers and Infants	3		

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Message from the President

Catholic Charities is about people. This includes you who receive this newsletter – the people of the Church as well as the wider community. It also includes our staff – committed, confident and willing to go the extra mile. But most importantly, Catholic Charities is about the people we serve.

As president of Catholic Charities USA, I was not able to witness the direct impact our services had on people in need. Our role was to support member agencies in their mission. Serving as president of Catholic Charities here in the Archdiocese of Boston has and continues to be a learning experience for me. For here, I see the daily effect our services have on the hungry, the homeless and those looking for a new start in life.

Over the last several months I have visited all of our community service centers. It is in these centers that we serve people in need from across the spectrum of life – young and old, vulnerable and frail. Fundamental to this agency is the idea that every human life is sacred, no matter what stage in life. If our clients' dignity is threatened or if they feel vulnerable, we are there to help. We help sustain and support human life and its various needs.

As needs change, we respond. An increase in violence this spring prompted those at our Teen Center in Dorchester to start a Youth Mediation Program. The Teen Center is where young adults can go after school for safety, study, support and community. Now, the Youth Mediation Program will train teens in how to resolve issues peacefully rather than with violence.

Catholic Charities is truly an organization for life. We support and aid all who need help – no matter what age, no matter what situation. Without the people we serve, Catholic Charities would not need to exist. Because of them, Catholic Charities must exist.

Rev. J. Bryan Hehir
President

Befriending the Elderly

Ninety-two year old Joe lived by himself in a small home in Lynn. His family, though concerned about him, did not live nearby and was unable to visit with him except on weekends. Consequently, he spent most of his time alone.

Alice began visiting Joe. After her first visit, Joe became very taken with Alice. He trusted her and knew she would become the listening ear he needed. At the end of her second visit, Joe grabbed Alice's hand and held on tightly. Alice, who was very touched, gave Joe a hug. "No one ever hugs me anymore," he then said to her.

Through Catholic Charities North's Companion to the Aging Program, Alice and other volunteers visit with elders in the Lynn area. They do not bring groceries or pick up prescriptions. They provide the social interaction (an ear to listen and perhaps a hand to hold) that many elders live without.

In Lynn, more than 12 percent of the population is 65 or older, and many live alone. Most clients are in their 80s, with numerous health-related problems and disabilities. For the most part, they only leave their homes for medical appointments.

Catholic Charities North is the only agency in Lynn providing this type of free visitation service to the homebound. The program, which began in 2000, strives to alleviate the loneliness that comes from being isolated due to illness or aging. Companions visit for about an hour and a half each week and provide pastoral support to those who desire it regardless of faith. Their personal and caring presence helps to reduce the isolation felt by these elders and allows them to live out their last days with love, dignity and the knowledge that someone cares.

The volunteer companions range in age from 30 to 90. Many are retired or semi-retired. They all feel a strong commitment to their elderly friend and work to build a relationship that may last three to four years or longer.

"Many of the physical needs of the homebound are being met. Lacking in this area was someone to sit down and listen to them," said Program Manager Sally Rooney. "Providing a visitation service to these individuals alleviates some of their loneliness. It also identifies additional needs that demand attention."

On one of her visits with Joe in early January, Alice noticed that the house was extremely cold. When she checked the thermostat, the temperature was below 55 degrees. Joe had not even noticed. Unable to reach any family members, she called the oil company and waited until someone showed up. As it turned out, the oil company had to replace a part in the oil burner. Ironically, it was not even Alice's scheduled day to visit, but something caused her to visit Joe that day.

"Our companions are providing a great service to these elders, but each of them would tell you that they receive more from the relationship than they give to it," Sally said. "Through these relationships, trusting friendships are formed. You can't put a price on a friend." ❤️

HMSC Offers Unique Services to Mothers and Infants

The Sante Manman Se Sante Pitit Program, which translated from Haitian Creole means “the health of the mother is the health of the child,” provides comprehensive prenatal, perinatal and neonatal support to the Haitian community. Operated out of the Haitian Multi-Service Center, this program is unique in that it serves pregnant women, new parents and infants up to 2 years of age.

“Most of our clients are dealing with a language barrier,” said Program Director Marie Verdieu. “They are late in their pregnancies and have received no prenatal care. They have no health insurance and don’t know where to go.”



Sante Manman Se Sante Pitit Program Director Marie Verdieu, a registered nurse, checks Armonie’s blood pressure during a prenatal home visit.

Marie tells the story of Armonie, a pregnant woman from Haiti, whose husband was killed as a result of the violence surrounding former President Jean Bertrand Aristide’s resignation. She moved to Boston in March leaving her two children, an 18-year-old girl and a 9-year-old boy, with friends in Haiti. She had no doctor for prenatal care, no health insurance and no home, so she went to the Haitian Multi-Service Center for help.

“I came from Haiti with no clothes,” Armonie said. “I was hungry, you fed me. I did not know where to go for prenatal care, but you referred me to prenatal. I had no home, but you took me to a shelter, and they wanted me to come the same day. If the program did not exist, I do not know what I would do.”

The Sante Manman Se Sante Pitit Program helps to promote a healthy pregnancy for the mother by increasing prenatal care and providing infant and family nutritional counseling. The program also aids in avoiding developmental delays by ensuring that babies are healthy and in preventing child abuse and neglect by making certain that babies receive adequate care. Parents are supported in nurturing positive outcomes for their children by strengthening their parenting skills and in preventing psychosocial problems from escalating in the mother by improving her emotional health and, therefore, her family.

Continued on page 4.

Dorchester Teens Visit Washington, D.C....from page 1

as well as the challenges that confront youth, such as drug and alcohol use, family conflict and violence. Homework help includes time in the computer lab for word processing or Internet research, along with tutoring to prepare students for the MCAS or SAT. Evenings conclude with recreational activities.

Some teens are selected as counselors in training and work with younger students in the After-School Program, which begins at 2:30 p.m. each weekday. Others serve as members of the Teen Council, meeting regularly to discuss issues affecting youth and the center, and seek resolution to conflict among members. The Teen Council also assists in the development and implementation of new programs.

“The counselors in training are great role models and mentors for the 65 children in the program,” said Nicole Pascarelli O’Brien, director of the After-School Program. “They not only help with homework and play basketball but take an interest in the children and their progress, which is reciprocated.”

A recent addition by the Teen Council is the Youth Mediation Program. Twelve teens are being trained to help others solve problems peacefully rather than with violence. This program was developed in response to the wave of youth violence the city saw this spring, prompting local authorities to encourage community organizations to develop new ways to reach out to at-risk youth.

“Because of the recent gang violence in this area, youth mediation is a much needed program for our community,” said Paulo DeBarros, coordinator of the Teen Center.

The center also gives teens the opportunity to carry out supervised community service projects to increase their knowledge of their community and its needs.

“Too often we hear and read negative things about teens,” Paulo said. “The Teen Center proves that teens can be a positive, dynamic force in the community, but to do so, they need support and guidance.” ❤️

Kudos

Because the programs of Catholic Charities provide assistance for a number of clients’ life stages, our volunteers are able to help the young or the elderly, the hungry or the homeless. In April, the following volunteers were recognized at Catholic Social Services’ Annual Volunteer Luncheon.

The Eileen G. Tully Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to **Kathy Foley** of the Labouré Center’s youth mentoring program, South Boston T.E.A.M. Kathy has been with her mentee for over 3 years. She also attends mentor support meetings and mentor recruitment events, and offers advice to newly matched mentors.

Those listed below also were nominated for the Volunteer of the Year Award.

Contributing a number of hours to the food pantry at Catholic Charities South is **Francis Duggan**. He not only stocks shelves, fills bags and helps clients to their cars with groceries, but serves as a liaison between the food pantry and grocery store.

Doris Harriman has been an integral part of refugee resettlement efforts for many years. She coordinates volunteers to help with the acquisition and delivery of household items and furnishings as well as visits to newly arrived families.

Daisy Monsalve provides much needed language assistance to a number of Spanish-speaking children as a Foster Grandparent. She spends 15 hours each week encouraging, nurturing and gently challenging children who need additional educational support.

Volunteering for eight years, **Joyce Ann Resil** has served as a friendly visitor to four elders. She exemplifies the program’s goal of volunteers establishing long-lasting relationships that bring happiness to the elders’ lives.

Nancy Ryan provides assistance to families through the Initial Response services at Catholic Charities North. She is also an inspiration for a new volunteer effort, Grandparents for Literacy, where volunteers read to youngsters at the Lynn Child Care Center.

Armando Santiago has excelled at restoring the faith and motivation of many volunteers in the recently changed food pantry at El Centro del Cardenal by doing his work with devotion, enthusiasm and an optimistic attitude.

Members of the **Creative Handwork Group** received a special group recognition for their work producing handmade items including hats, mittens, scarves and sweaters for our clients.

Thanks to every volunteer for the hard work you do on behalf of Catholic Charities!

HMSC Offers Unique Services... from page 3

Before a client's child is born, case managers educate the woman on the importance of prenatal care as well as childbirth. Case managers help clients apply for health insurance, make appointments and even provide transportation and translation services if needed.

After the baby is born, services continue to ensure the health and safety of the child. Mothers are encouraged to schedule pediatric appointments. They are educated on issues such as nutrition. Parenting skills also are strengthened through parent support groups and meetings.

The emotional health of the mother is also improved through a one-on-one psychological assessment. If needed, a home visit with a psychologist is scheduled. Additional counseling and safety planning are provided when there is evidence of abuse by a spouse or another family member. In addition, a breast cancer awareness program provides breast cancer education and referrals to mammography.

Clients that begin the program before their baby is born remain until the infant turns 2 years old. At that time, the infant is referred to child care, most likely at the Haitian Center. Many adults then transition into other programs offered at the Haitian Center, such as adult education, in order to improve their English or computer literacy skills.

"The program has touched over 3,000 lives since it was founded in 1989," Marie said. "Our clients are very appreciative of the services we offer." ❤️

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Yawkey Foundation Awards \$5 Million to Support New Community Service Center

The presentation of a \$5 million check by the Yawkey Foundation for the new community service center in Dorchester was the highlight of the 2004 Spring Celebration held June 2 at the Seaport Hotel.

John Harrington, executive director of the Yawkey Foundation, presented the check for the new building, which will house the existing Haitian Multi-Service Center and Greater Boston Community Service Center, both longstanding child and family service centers of Catholic Charities located in Dorchester. The name of the new building will be the Yawkey Center and is slated to open in the fall of 2005.

"The Yawkey Foundation Board has been following the progress of this planned project for more than two years," Mr. Harrington said. "The programs will bring tremendous benefits to children and families in Dorchester and its surrounding communities."

The Yawkey Foundation also is donating \$70,000 to the Nazareth Residence for Mothers and Children, a transitional home for women and their children who are living with HIV or AIDS.

Rev. J. Bryan Hehir also announced a \$2.5 million gift from the Nazareth Foundation for the new community service center.

Another highlight of the evening was the recognition of Sister Eustace Caggiano, who is retiring after 33 years of service as director of the Cardinal Cushing Resource Center in the South End.

"She has labored in the spirit of the Gospel," Rev. Hehir said. "The logic of the Gospel is that God has given freely to us, and we are to give freely to others as God has given to us. ... We will try to live in the logic of the Gospel more faithfully because Sister Eustace has walked before us and taught us how to do that."



Yawkey Foundation Executive Director John Harrington presents a gift of \$5 million to Catholic Charities for the new community service center in Dorchester. Pictured (L to R): Rev. J. Bryan Hehir; Neal Harte, advisory board chair for the Greater Boston Community Service Center; Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley; Chelinde Edouard, advisory board chair for the Haitian Multi-Service Center; John Harrington; and Jeff Kaneb, vice chair of the board of trustees.